

The Ballot Box a Remedy for National Crimes.

A

SERMON,

ENTITLED

‘THE REMEDY FOR DUELING,’

By REV. LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.;

APPLIED TO THE

CRIME OF SLAVEHOLDING.

—◆—
By ONE OF HIS FORMER PARISHIONERS.
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B O S T O N :
PUBLISHED BY ISAAC KNAPP,
No. 25, Cornhill.

1838.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

On the 16th of April, 1806,—more than 32 years ago,—the Rev. Dr. BEECHER, formerly of Boston, but now President of the Lane Theological Seminary, preached before the Presbytery of Long Island, a sermon, entitled, ‘*The Remedy for Dueling* ;’ in which he maintained that it was the duty of every man to withhold his vote from any person who had fought or aided in fighting a duel. We had not read the sermon for several years, until it was brought to our mind by the toast of Mr. Winslow, (Dr. Beecher’s successor in this city,) uttered in Faneuil Hall on the 4th of July, and which declared a notorious duelist to be ‘*worthy*’ of the highest office which it is in the power of the American people to bestow. On giving it a re-perusal, we were deeply impressed by its powerful arguments and graphic illustrations ; and we could not help exclaiming, ‘*How completely they would apply to slavery and slaveholders !*’ We run our eye over the pages, reading *slaveholding*, for *dueling*, *man-stealing* for *murder*, &c., and we could not resist the conviction, that nearly all the Doctor’s reasoning was even more conclusive, when thus applied, than in its original form. On reflection, we determined to make such an application of the discourse, by reprinting the most of it, striking out the word *dueling* and its correlative terms and phrases, and inserting in their place the words *slavery*, *slaveholders*, &c., as the case might require. The Doctor’s arguments being public property, there can be no objection to such a use of them, if proper care be taken to avoid

making him any way responsible for the act. In order to leave no room for cavil, therefore, and that every reader may have the means of judging of the propriety of the alterations for himself, the words inserted by us will in every instance be enclosed in []. If there is aught of incoherency in any part of the Doctor's reasoning, every one can easily determine whether or not it is owing to our alterations, by simply applying the language to the crime of dueling, as in the original.

It appears to us that the Doctor's arguments, if they were *conclusive* as applied to dueling, must be admitted to be absolutely INVINCIBLE in their application to slaveholding, especially when it is considered that the first-mentioned crime, atrocious as it is, is one of the LEGITIMATE FRUITS and APPENDAGES of slavery. These two crimes, in this country at least, stand connected with each other as *cause* and *effect*; and both alike are the 'peculiar institutions' of the south. It is slavery, operating in the mind of the slaveholder to destroy all reverence for liberty as a principle, undermining his regard for the sacredness of human life, and begetting a spirit of unmingled selfishness, a contempt for equal rights, an impatience of moral restraints, and a love of tyranny and domination, out of which dueling grows as naturally as weeds spring up in an uncultivated garden. That such is the case, we have evidence in the fact, that the practice of dueling recedes just in proportion as freedom advances and the true doctrine of equal rights is carried out in the practice of the people. Once the obligations of the so-called 'code of honor,' (but which is really the code of MURDER,) were recognized at the north; but they were thrown off when slavery disappeared from among us. Since the spirit of slavery has again become rife in our midst, and a disposition has been manifested to relinquish the rights and liberties of the north to protect the 'domestic institutions' of the south—to lay the liberty of the press and the freedom of speech, a smoking sacrifice upon the bloody altar of southern despotism—there has been

found a northern representative in Congress, a son of New England, who could so far forget his obligations to his family, his country and his God, as to risk his own life in an attempt to take that of another. We point to the blood of Cilley, and to his living MURDERER, and to the blood of all who have thus 'died as the fool dieth,' as illustrations of the corrupting influence of SLAVERY. Who that knows enough of human nature to trace effects to their appropriate cause, can for a moment doubt, that if slavery had been continued in the free States until the present moment, the murderous system of dueling would also have prevailed among us? Or that, if the south had abolished slavery, dueling would have ceased? As Dr. Beecher truly says, 'there is a *relationship* in crimes, which renders familiarity with one a *harbinger to familiarity with another*;' and never was this relationship more clearly manifested than in the two crimes of dueling and slaveholding.

Surely, then, if Dr. Beecher's argument is sound—if it is right and proper for us to put down dueling by a resort to the ballot-box—much more have we a right, and much more it is our duty, thus to put down its prolific parent—SLAVERY. If we may thus demolish one of the *branches* of the tree of despotism, who shall forbid us to lay the well-sharpened axe at its root? If to vote for duelists, 'is a practice in direct opposition to the precepts of the christian religion,' what a daring offence it must be in the sight of God to vote for men who are BOTH DUELISTS AND SLAVEHOLDERS? Yet, a man combining in himself both these characters, and who is besides a notorious GAMBLER and PROFANE SWEARER, has been toasted by Rev. Hubbard Winslow, an 'evangelical' clergyman of Boston, and the successor of Dr. Beecher, as 'WORTHY TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!' *O horrible!* How appropriate is the scathing and terrific language of POLLOCK:

‘ The prince, or magistrate, however named,
 Or praised, who, knowing better, acted thus,
 Was wicked, and received, as he deserved,
 Damnation. But the UNFAITHFUL PRIEST, *what tongue*
Enough shall execrate ? * . * * *
 The words that should sufficiently accurse,
 And execrate *such* reprobate, had need
 Come glowing from the lips of eldest hell.’

We cannot forbear to remark that we consider it peculiarly fortunate, at this important crisis, when an effort is about to be made to induce the friends of impartial liberty to avail themselves of their right of suffrage to overthrow slavery in the District of Columbia, to prevent its further extension, and to annihilate the odious traffic in human flesh wherever it is carried on under the authority of Congress—when the propriety of resorting to this powerful instrumentality is doubted by many of the well meaning, though timid friends of our cause—and when our opponents, in some quarters, are endeavoring to intimidate us by their false accusations—in such circumstances, we say, we consider it peculiarly fortunate that we have found so able a champion of our rights and so clear and powerful an expounder of our political duties and responsibilities,—and one, too, whose opinions have so much weight with a large portion the people of New England,—as the Rev. Dr. BEECHER.

To prevent all possibility of mistake, and to repel, in advance, the charge of garbling, which, in a similar case, was brought against another individual, we repeat, and beg that the fact may be remembered—that the sermon, as preached by Dr. Beecher, was applied to the case of *dueling*—that the word *slaveholding* and its correlative terms and phrases as they appear in [] were inserted by us, and that we alone are responsible for this application of the Doctor’s arguments. The heads which appear over the several paragraphs are also ours.

ONE OF DR. BEECHER’S FORMER PARISHIONERS.

SERMON.

ISAIAH LIX. 14, 15.

‘ And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.’

After speaking of the great criminality of the people of Israel at the time these words were uttered, and comparing it with that of the people of this country, as evinced by the practice of dueling, [slaveholding] Dr. Beecher proceeds to ask and answer

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

But it will be demanded, ‘ how can the people prevent [slaveholding] ? *By withholding your suffrage from every man [who is a slaveholder,] or who has been directly or indirectly concerned in [slaveholding ;](1) and by intrusting to men*

(1) The reader will perceive at once, that this doctrine, and all the subsequent reasonings upon it, will apply with equal force against all, whether actual slaveholders or not, who countenance the system or connive at its iniquities, or who refuse to wield the

of fair moral character, and moral principle, the making and execution of your laws.

OBJECT OF THE DISCOURSE.

It will therefore be the object of this discourse, to suggest and illustrate the reasons which should induce every man to withhold his vote from any person who [is a slaveholder,] or who has been *directly* or *indirectly* concerned in [slaveholding.]

REQUIREMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

The elevation of [slaveholders] to power, is a practice in direct opposition to the precepts of the christian religion. * * * * The character of rulers, God has himself prescribed. They must be *just men*. Such as *fear God—a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well*. Do [slaveholders] answer to this description? Are they just men? Do they fear God? Look at their law of [slavery.] It constitutes the party judge in his own cause, and executor of his own sentence. Its precepts, like those of Draco, are written in blood. Death, or exposure to it is its lightest penalty; and this, with unrelenting severity, is inflicted for the *most* trifling offence, as well as for the most enormous

moral and political power placed in their hands for its overthrow. The non-slaveholding representative in Congress, who votes against the right of petition and the freedom of debate, or refuses to plead the cause of impartial justice, and suffers the fundamental principles of the Constitution to be madly trampled under foot, without raising his voice and exerting his influence in their defence, is to the slaveholder what the *second* in a duel is to his *principal*. He is both 'directly' and 'indirectly concerned' in sustaining the system; and is therefore unworthy to be trusted.

crime; and as often perhaps upon the innocent, as upon the guilty.

No plea of reverence for God, of respect for human law, of conscience, of innocency, absence of anger, actual friendship, affection to parents, wife or children, the hope of heaven or fear of hell, is for one moment admitted. All obligations are cancelled; all ties are burst asunder; all consequences are disregarded. * * * * It is a law which inculcates no virtue, and which prohibits no crime, if it be *honorably committed*. It tolerates adultery, blasphemy, intemperance, revenge and murder. * * * * The obedient subjects of a law so impious, so unmerciful and unjust, God hath denounced as unfit to govern men. They are disfranchised by heaven. * * * * Shall we then dare to rise up in the face of heaven, and turn judgment away backward? Shall we snatch from the dungeon and gallows the victims of justice, to invest them with power, and adorn them with dignity and honor?

THE PUBLIC SAFETY.

A regard to the public safety, as well as respect to the authority of God, and an abhorrence of murder, should withhold the suffrage of the community from the [slaveholder.] When we intrust life and liberty and property in the hands of men, we desire some pledge of their fidelity. But what pledge can the [slaveholder] give? His religious principle is nothing—his moral principle is nothing. His honor is our only security. But is this sufficient? Are the temptations of power so feeble, is the public and private interest so inseparable, are the opportunities of fraud so few, that amid the projects of ambition, the cravings of avarice, and the conflicts of party, there is no need of conscience to

guarantee the integrity of rulers? * * * *
 The honor of a [slaveholding] legislator does not restrain him in the least from innumerable crimes, which affect the peace of society. He may condemn the Saviour of men, and hate and oppose the religion of his country. He may be a Julian in bitterness, and by swearing cause the earth to mourn: in passion a whirlwind; in cruelty to tenants, to servants, and to his family, a tiger. He may be a gambler, a prodigal, a fornicator, an adulterer, a drunkard, a murderer, and not violate the laws of [slavery.] Nay, [slavery] not only tolerates crime, but in many instances it is the direct and only temptation to crime.

PARTY POLITICS NOTHING—MORAL PRINCIPLE
 EVERY THING.

I know it is said, that a man's principles and his private character are nothing to us. If his ability be adequate, and his politics correct, and his public conduct as yet irreproachable, this is sufficient. But are you prepared to be the dupes of such wild absurdity? According to this sentiment, a man may set his mouth against the heavens—he may be a drunkard in the intervals of official duty, a prodigal, a tyrant, a mere savage in his family, and still be trumpeted by unprincipled politicians and electioneering hand-bills, as the great champion of liberty, the very Atlas on whose shoulders rests the destiny of his country.(1) But what is a man's political

(1) Yes, and be toasted too, by a Boston clergyman, as 'worthy to be President of the United States!'—As an illustration of the manner in which such characters as the Dr. describes are 'trumpeted by unprincipled politicians,' as 'champions of liberty,' read the following toast, which was drunk at Philadelphia on the on the 4th of July :

creed, what is his past conformity to your wishes, when his profligate private life demonstrates that he is prepared to betray you the first moment he shall find it for his interest? Dispense with moral principle and private virtue, and all is gone. You can find no substitute; honor is a cobweb, and patriotism an empty name in the hour of trial. The single circumstance, that the interest of the [slaveholder] will not come in competition with your interest, is your only security that, if able, he will not sport with your liberties as wantonly as he has sported with, or is prepared to sport with, the [liberty] of his neighbor. Admit, that there are instances, in which men destitute of principle have acted with integrity in public stations; can you tell me *how many thousands have betrayed their trust for want of it?* These are exempt cases—the persons did not happen to be tempted. But do you desire no better pledge of rectitude than the mere absence of temptation? Will you confide in thieves and swindlers to legislate, because two in a thousand, though utterly unprincipled, may have found it for their interest not to cheat you? It is in trying emergencies, when the price of perfidy is high, and temptation imperious, that unprincipled men are weighed in the balance and found wanting. And will you appoint cowards and traitors to command your armies, because they might answer in time of peace; or intrust your lives to quacks in medicine, because under slight indispositions, they might suffice to administer herb-drink? Why does this lingering confidence in the

Henry Clay: The apostle of American liberty, the champion of human rights—always first in the charge, the last in the retreat. His long services, undeviating principles, and noble self sacrifice, demand the highest civic honors his country can bestow.'

[slaveholder] still survive the extinction of moral principle? One crime of equal magnitude in any other case, would decide his fate forever. The failing merchant, convicted of dishonesty, is *recorded* a knave; the receipt of a bribe by a judge, is irrevocable infamy; perjury cancels forever all confidence; the thief solicits in vain the public suffrage; the highway robber can find none to exercise charity, none to palliate his crime; and the common murderer, might he live, would be doomed to linger out a life of disgusting infamy. But the [slaveholder,] who in cold blood, or with bitter malice and burning rage [strikes down the liberties of] his neighbor, can find enough to exercise charity and palliate his crime: a whole state, a whole nation, to testify by their votes that they consider it nothing.

PECULIAR EDUCATION NO EXCUSE.

But alas! the [slaveholder,] *frail man*, is overcome by temptation. *He* has peculiar sensibilities, habits of education, and modes of thinking, which in this *one case* led him astray, without inferring at all a general deficiency of principle, religious or moral. In plain language, because the [slaveholder] is *educated* a [slaveholder,] the crime of [man-stealing] in him is very small, and is consistent with religious and moral principle. If men, then, are only educated to thieving, assassination and robbery—if, by habit and false reasoning, they are so familiarised to crime as to rob, and steal, and destroy life without much consciousness of guilt, *then*, indeed, they are *very honest men*, and are fit to superintend the affairs of the nation.

MEN DESTITUTE OF PRINCIPLE NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

But were it admitted—did we even know that some one [slaveholder] was in fact a man

of principle, and overcome by stress of temptation only, would it be proper to confide in him as a legislator? Would you, had his crime been common murder, an act of robbery or perjury, though you knew he had been surprised or thrust into it by powerful temptation?—Would it not manifest him, if not unprincipled, at least too feeble and flexible to stand before the numerous and powerful temptations to which his situation would expose him? A coward may be an honest man, but certainly a coward should not be intrusted with the command of armies. Besides, this lightly passing over crimes of the deepest dye, I may even say, this rewarding them with the profits and honors of the state, confounds in the public mind the distinctions between virtue and vice, and weakens that abhorrence of crime, which is the guardian of public morality.(1) Elevate swindlers to office, and who shall guarantee the integrity of the common people? Elevate adulterers, and who will punish incontinence? Elevate murderers, and who will be the avengers of blood?

(1) Here is a truth of the highest importance, which is too generally overlooked. Of all the crimes which have blackened the pages of history, no one is more atrocious or heaven-daring, than that of holding and treating the image of God as property! And yet how 'lightly' is it passed over! and how little is thought of it! Alas! what havoc has slavery made with the conscience and morals of the people! The election to office, of men who are guilty of this crime, and admitting them to the pulpit and the communion table, has well nigh 'confounded in the public mind' all 'distinctions between virtue and vice;' and unless the eyes of the people are speedily opened, there is too much reason to fear that they will be left of God to 'wax worse

SLAVERY A SYSTEM OF DESPOTISM.

The system of [slavery] is a system of despotism, tending directly and powerfully to the destruction of civil liberty. A free government is a government of laws made by the people for the protection of life, reputation, and property. A despotic government is where life and all its blessings are subject to the caprice of an individual. Those maxims and practices, therefore, which remove life, reputation, and property, from under the protection of law, and subject them to the caprice of an individual, are the essence of despotism. Nor is it material whether this is done by open violence, or by the application of unlawful motives which as effectually answer the purpose. Every man conforming to the laws of his country, has a right to the peaceable enjoyment of life and all its immunities. Nor has any individual a right, directly or indirectly to interrupt this enjoyment. * * If the despotic principles of [slavery] terminated in theory, they might excite our compassion as mere distempers of the brain; but their practical influence is powerful and fatal, as inimical to our rights in *fact*, as it is in theory; tending directly and powerfully to the destruction of civil liberty.

EQUAL LAWS UNSATISFACTORY TO SLAVEHOLDERS.

Equal laws are essential to civil liberty; but equal laws are far from satisfying the elevated

and worse,' until at length, when the measure of their iniquity shall be full, a fate more dreadful than that of Egypt or Tyre will overtake them! Shall we continue to provoke the judgments of heaven by countenancing the worst of crimes, and electing to office the vilest of criminals? Shall we blunt still more the already benumbed sensibilities of the people? God forbid.

claims of [slaveholders.] That protection which the law affords to them in common with others, they despise. They must have more—a right to decide upon, and to redress their own grievances. ‘When we please,’ (say they,) ‘we will avail ourselves of the law; and when we please, we will legislate for ourselves. For the vulgar, the dull forms of law may suffice; but for a [system] so sacred, and for feelings so refined and sensitive as ours, they are vastly inadequate. Nor shall they restrain our hand from the vindication of our [domestic institutions,] or protect the wretch who shall presume to impeach them.’ Is this liberty and equality? Are these gentlemen, indeed, so greatly superior to the people? Is their [system] so much more important? Are their feelings so much more sacred? Is pain more painful to them, or self-government less their duty than ours? Must we bear all injuries which the law cannot redress? Must we stifle our resentments, or, if we vent them in acts of murder, swing upon the gallows; while they with impunity express their indignation, and satiate with blood a revengeful spirit?

PECULIAR SENSIBILITIES OF SLAVEHOLDERS.

But education, it is said, has inspired these men with sensibilities peculiar to themselves, for which the cold process of law has made no provision. So has the education of the savage given him peculiar feelings, for the gratification of which, the dilatory forms of law are equally inadequate. But will you let the savage loose with tomahawk and scalping-knife, because educational feelings can find no consolation in the regular administration of justice? The feelings for which the law makes no provision, are feelings for which it ought not to provide—ungodly feelings—the haughtiness of pride and relentless

revenge, and which, instead of a dispensation for indulgence, deserve the chastisement of scorpions. To reduce such unruly spirits, the law should brandish its glittering sword, and utter all its thunders. * * * * If they will not take the trouble to govern their temper—if they will not encounter that self-denial which the laws of God and man inculcate—if they will be savages in a civilized land, let them be treated as savages. And when they [rob,] elevate them to the gallows, and not to posts of honor.

JUSTICE SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED IMPARTIALLY.

The administration of justice ought, above all things, to be impartial. The rich and the honorable ought to be equally liable to punishment for their crimes with the poor; and, according to their desert, punished with equal severity. But while [slaveholders] bear sway, this can never be. It is a fact, that the man who steals a shilling is more liable to detection, and more sure to be punished, than the man who [steals human beings.] Is this equal? Shall petty thefts excite indignation and be punished with severity, while [men-stealers] with bold impunity walk on every side?

SLAVERY INSPIRES CONTEMPT FOR LAW.

A sacred regard to law is indispensable to the existence of a mild government. In proportion as obedience ceases to be voluntary, and the contempt of law becomes common, must the nerves of government be strengthened until it becomes in essence, if not in name, a monarchy. We must have protection; and the more numerous and daring the enemy, the more power must be delegated to subdue and control them. That contempt of law, therefore, which is manifested by the [slaveholder,] is a blow at the vitals of liberty. It is the more deadly, because,

from the genius of our government, the example has a peculiar influence.

PERNICIOUS EXAMPLE OF SLAVEHOLDING LEGISLATORS.

In despotic governments the example of the legislator may not be so pernicious. Chains, dungeons, racks and gibbets, may keep the people in their place, although their rulers should give themselves a license to sin. Viewed also at such an abject distance, the example loses much of its power. But under the mild government of a republic, there is no such distance between the rulers and the ruled, and no such terrific restraints to deter from the imitation of their example. To elevate to office, therefore, [slaveholders,] the deliberate contemners of law, is to place their example in the most conspicuous point of view, and to clothe it with most woful efficacy to destroy public virtue. Select for your rulers men of profligate example, who condemn the religion and despise the laws of their country, and they need not conspire to introduce despotism; you will yourselves introduce it—you will flee to it, as the damned will flee in the day of judgment to rocks and mountains, to shield you from the operation of more intolerable evils.

SLAVERY IMPAIRS THE LIBERTY OF SPEECH AND OF THE PRESS.

The tendency of [slavery] to restrain liberty of speech and of the press; is also direct and powerful. The people have a right to investigate the conduct of rulers, and to scrutinize the character of candidates for office; and as the private and moral character of a man is the truest index, it becomes them to be particular on this point. But who will speak on this sub-

ject, who will publish, when the [slaveholder] stands before him with pistol at the breast? * * While bent upon promotion, and desperate in his course, he is prepared to seal in death the lip that shall publish his infamy.

ENCROACHMENTS OF SLAVEHOLDERS ALARMING.

Nor let any imagine that the influence of this engine of despotism is small; it is powerful already, and is every year becoming more so, as [slaveholding] increases; and God only knows where its influence will end. The actual encroachments of Britain, when we first began to resist them, were not one half so alarming as the encroachments of [slaveholders.] * * * * And shall lawless despots at this day perform what all the fleets and armies of England could not? * * * * If the road to Washington was beset with robbers—il they sacrificed yearly as many as are now slain [by slaveholders,] could the wretches live unmolested? Their crimes notorious, could they mingle in society? Could they boast of their prowess, and glory in their shame? Could they enjoy the confidence of the people, and receive their suffrages, and be made the guardians of civil liberty?

GLARING INCONSISTENCY.

The inconsistency of voting for [slaveholders] is glaring. To profess attachment to liberty, and vote for men whose principles and whose practices are alike hostile to liberty—to contend for equal laws, and clothe with power those who despise them—to enact laws, and intrust their execution to men who are the first to break them, is a farce too ridiculous to be acted by freemen. * * * * Annihilate your criminal code—level to the ground your prisons, and restore to the sweets of society, and embraces of

charity, their more innocent victims. Be consistent. If you tolerate one set of villians, tolerate them all; if [slaveholding] does not stagger your confidence, let it not waver at inferior crimes.

HYPOCRITICAL PRAYERS.

In our prayers, we request that God would bestow upon us good rulers; *just men, ruling in the fear of God*. But by voting for [slaveholders] we demonstrate the insincerity of such prayers—for when, by the providence of God, it is left to our choice whom we will have, we vote for murderers. Unless therefore, we would continue to mock God by hypocritical prayers, we must cease praying for good men, or we must cease to patronize men of blood. Do we not pray also for the preservation of liberty, and the continuance of national prosperity? And do we not know that good rulers are the chosen instruments of the divine blessing; and that when God would chastise a people, unprincipled rulers are the rod of his anger? When therefore, the selection of rulers is left to ourselves, shall we disregard his chosen instruments of mercy, and expect his blessing? Shall we put into his hand the rod of his anger, and expect to escape chastisement?

PUBLIC SENTIMENT—THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE.

Laws in republics depend for their prompt execution, upon a correct and efficient public sentiment. The highway robber need not publish his daring exploits in a newspaper to attract notice. A common indignation glows in the public mind—in all directions the son of violence is pursued, and when arrested and convicted, is sure to die. * * * The great officers of government, and other influential characters, dare not, if disposed, connive at the

crime. The public indignation, like a high swollen river, would sweep away any one who should presume to turn aside, or obstruct its course. But the frequency of the crime [of slaveholding] and its immemorial impunity has deadened the public feeling. Many disapprove, but do not sufficiently abhor the crime; they are *sorry*, but are not indignant. * * [Slaveholders] are apprised of this debilitated state of public feeling, and are therefore not afraid to contravene the feeble public will. It is not a torrent, unmanageable and dreadful, but a puny stream which they dare to oppose, and which they have learned to manage. * * We blame our rulers, but by whom are such men made rulers, and by whose negligence are they emboldened to wink at this most accursed sin? * * The traitor is in the citadel; we have ourselves put him there, knowing also that he would let the criminal go; of course, we are accessory to his escape and to the prostration of justice, as really as if with our own hands we unbarred and threw open the gates of his prison. Indeed, by removing the only restraints which [slaveholders] can feel, we indirectly encourage the crime. By appointing them to legislate, we remove all fear of legal punishment—all fear of pecuniary loss—all fear of disgrace. We say to the aspiring politician, ‘be of good courage, and avenge yourself; it shall be no stain upon your character, no impediment to your promotion. If you *please* not to [rob] your fellow men, we shall be glad; but if you *do please* to [rob] them, it shall not have the weight of a straw to prevent your elevation.’ By removing, in this way, all restraints from the commission of the crime, we encourage it, though indirectly, yet really and effectually, as if we rewarded the culprit from the public treas-

ury. Nay, by elevating to important stations men whose hands are stained with blood, we do little less than reward them *for* their crimes; and it has been asserted, and by men long conversant in the affairs of state, that [slaveholding] is a passport to honor.

CONTEMPT FOR THE PEOPLE—HYPOCRITICAL PROFESSIONS.

The contempt with which [slaveholders] treat the opinions and feelings of the community, is a reason why we should cease to confide in them. The people, whatever men of honor may think of them, constitute the strength, the virtue, and glory of the nation; and their opinions and wishes demand respect from those who legislate for them. But little do [slaveholders] care for our opinions or our feelings. They move in a sphere too much above us, to let themselves down to the standard of our conceptions, or to give themselves concern about our desires or aversions. When an election is depending, when they need our votes to gratify their ambition, or satiate their avarice, then indeed they sympathise most tenderly with the people. The people are every thing; their wishes are sacred, and their voice is the voice of God. But let this end be accomplished, and neither liberty, nor patriotism, nor the voice of the people, nor the voice of God, can avail to deter them from deeds the most barbarous and despotic. Shall we then vote for men who treat with contempt our opinions and our feelings, who basely prostrate our laws, when we have nothing to bestow; and who again creep through all the dirty windings of hypocrisy, when their promotion depends on our will? What are all their professions of patriotism, contradicted by their conduct? And shall they deceive us still?

Let them plead for liberty with the tongue of men and angels, and adore her cause with the fervor of seraphs, they are hypocrites—mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

PUBLIC OPINION MUST BE COMBINED AND EXPRESSED.

The withholding our suffrage from [slaveholders] will tend to annihilate the practice, by arraying the public opinion against it. . . . Let the opinion of society on the subject of [slaveholding] be collected, combined, and expressed in the votes of the people, and it will operate most sensibly upon that class of men who now most despise it. It will involve a penalty which they cannot but feel, and which they cannot evade. . . . In this way we cut the sinews of [slaveholding,] and bind to good behavior by the motive which before impelled to the crime. The opinion of the people, that which is in fact public opinion, becomes prominent, assumes influence, and overwhelms the absurd opinions of bloody men. Motives of compassion and of justice, both demand this expression of public sentiment.

THE ONLY REMEDY.

Withholding the public suffrage from [slaveholders,] is the only method in which there is the least prospect of arresting the practice of [slaveholding.] We may reason, and ridicule, and lament, and remonstrate, and threaten, and legislate, and multiply penalties, and the evil will still progress. Environed by the subtleties of law and shielded by the perverted patronage of men in office, regardless of our grief and fearless of our indignation, they will laugh at our zeal and defy our efforts. There is no way to deal with these men, but to make them feel their dependence

on the people; and no way to effect this, but to take the punishment of their crimes into our own hands. Our conscience must be the judge, and we must ourselves convict, and fine, and disgrace them at the polls. Here, and no where beside, will our voice be heard, and our will become law.

EVILS PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE.

The evils justly to be apprehended from the continuance of [slaveholding,] call loudly upon us to awake in earnest to this subject, and apply with vigor the proposed remedy. . . . It fills the land with widows and with orphans. The tax is too heavy; the victims offered to Moloch are too numerous. Might the evil, however, be confined to its present limits, it would be less intolerable; but we have no ground to indulge such a hope. . . . It will stalk through our towns and desolate our villages. Let not these anticipations be deemed chimerical; they are legitimate inferences from the known principles of the human mind and the peculiar situation of our country; and they are justified also by experience. The mad example of Charles V. and Francis I. king of France, descended like a mighty torrent from the highest elevations of rank, down to the vale of private life. . . . In our own country and by a similar infatuation, [slaveholding] is steadily progressing; the example of great men and rulers is sweeping all before it, and is bending its destroying course to the vale of common life.

SLAVEHOLDING LEADS TO OTHER CRIMES.

Nor are the immediate effects of [slavery] the only consequences to be dreaded. The impunity attending the crime, the confidence reposed in [slaveholders,] and the honors bestowed upon them, contribute to diminish in

the public mind the guilt of crimes generally. There is a relationship in crimes which renders familiarity with one, a harbinger to familiarity with another. The wretch who has [struck down the liberties of his fellow-men,] will feel little compunction at any crime. Nor can the moral sensibilities of a people familiarised to [slaveholding,] and accustomed to look upon criminals of this description with confidence and respect, be preserved in full strength in reference to other crimes. [Slavery,] therefore, while it destroys directly its thousands, destroys by its depraving influence its tens of thousands.

THE EVIL RAPIDLY SPREADING.

The practice of [slaveholding] is rapidly progressing, disseminating its infection, and deadening the public sensibility. The effect already is great and alarming. . . . If the effect is not great, why this distinction in crimes of the same class—why so alive to the guilt of robbery, assassination, and murder of one kind and so dead to the guilt of [slaveholding?] If the effect of [slaveholding] upon the public mind is not great, why is it that murder can be committed in open day; the crime be made notorious, nay, proclaimed in the newspaper, and the murderer remain unmolested in his dwelling? Why does he not flee? . . . If the prevalence of [slaveholding] has not, and to an awful degree, affected the public mind, why such a number of half apologists for the crime; and how can we so patiently hear, and candidly weigh, and almost admit their arguments? Could you hear with equal patience assassination justified, though (as it well might be) by arguments equally conclusive? Why is it, if this deadly evil has not already palsied the feelings of the community, that even the members of car

churches have heretofore, with so little hesitation, voted for [slaveholders?] Is christianity compatible with [slavery?] Can you patronise the [man-stealer] by granting him your suffrage, and not become a partaker in his sin? Admit as the mildest, and as in general the true construction, that this has been done by christians ignorantly, not knowing often that those for whom they voted were [slaveholders,] or inconsiderately, not realizing the enormity of the crime—why did they not know—why did they not consider? The reason is obvious—

‘Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
Yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.’

This is precisely our alarming state. We have sunk through all these grades of moral degradation. We endure, we pity, we embrace [men-stealers.] And what will be next? A total apathy to crime.

AN ALARMING PROSPECT!

What is done, therefore, must be done quickly. Let the maxims of [slavery] once break out, and spread in the country, and infect the rising generation ; let the just abhorrence of the community be a little more effaced by the growing frequency of the crime, and we are undone. There will be no place to make a stand. Our liberties will be lost—our bands will become brass, and our fetters iron—no man’s life will be safe—the laws of the land will be a nullity—every man must tremble, and walk softly, and speak softly, lest he implicate his neighbor’s honor, and put in jeopardy his own life ; and [kidnapping] will become as common, as irremediable, and as little thought of, as assassination is in Spain, in Italy, and South America.

Then, indeed, will the descriptions of the prophet be horribly realised. *Judgment will be turned away backward—justice will stand afar off—truth will fall in the street, and equity be unable to enter. Yea, truth will fail, and he that departeth from evil, will make himself a prey. None will call for justice—revenge and murder will be the order of the day. We shall grope for the wall as the blind—we shall stumble at noon day as in the night—we shall be in desolate places as dead men.*

Shall we sit and calmly await the approach of these evils? Shall we bow our neck to the yoke? Shall we thrust our hands into the manacles preparing for them? What if these evils may not be realized in our day—have we no regard to posterity?

THE REMEDY AN EASY ONE.

The facility with which, in the way proposed, this evil may be suppressed, will render us forever inexcusable—will constitute us partakers in the sin, if we do not make the attempt.

There are, indeed, many [slaveholders] in our land, and many half-apologists for the crime, from whom no aid is to be expected. There are many too unprincipled, and others too indolent, to be engaged by considerations of duty: and there are some, and even professors of religion, whose strong *party prejudices*, and *political attachments* to [slaveholders.] will be liable to steel them against conviction, or impel them to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. But after all these deductions, there are yet remaining multitudes, thousands and thousands, whose abhorrence of [slaveholding] though diminished by the frequency of the crime, is still sufficient to overwhelm its abettors with infamy. Nothing is necessary to

awaken and embody in one formidable phalanx of opposition the great mass of our plain and honest people, but to place the crime in its horrid aspect and fearful connexions, full before them. Only let them see, and they will feel—let them feel, and they will act—will hurl indignant, every [slaveholder] whom they have elevated from his eminence, and consign to merited infamy every one who shall solicit their favor.

MINISTERS CAN AND MUST DO THE WORK!

Nor is it impracticable thus to exhibit the subject. **MINISTERS OF DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS, ALL UNITED, WOULD BE ABLE TO EFFECT IT PERFECTLY.** *Let each, in his appointed sphere, make due exertion to enlighten his flock, and the fire of indignation would soon begin to blaze through all the nation.* And if beside such exertions, further efforts should be needful, the newspaper, the magazine, and tract, may be enlisted as auxiliaries.

Nor can any reasonably object to such conduct on the part of ministers; nor will any one probably attempt it, who does not for himself or some favorite, fear the consequences. Our obligations are most solemn to lift up our voice, and to put forth our exertions against this sin. Our God calls to us from heaven—the damned call to us from hell—the blood of murdered victims from the ground lifts up its voice and mingles with the cry of the widow and the fatherless—the example of our Saviour, of the prophets, of the apostles, forbids us to be silent, or inactive.

It is in vain to cry out ‘priest-craft,’ or ‘political preaching;’ these watch-words will not answer here. The crime we oppose is peculiar to no party; it is common to all. It is a crime too

horrid to be palliated, too threatening to be longer endured in officers of government. Any political effect would be the consequence merely, not the object of our exertions. It would also be small and momentary; but, should it be great, such effect ought not to bring censure upon us, or alter the course of our duty. If we may not denounce [slaveholding,] because men of political eminence are guilty of the crime; because the enlightening of the consciences of our people would affect an election; every crime would soon find a sanctuary in the example of some great politician. Our mouths would be shut—we might not whisper the guilt of crimes, lest by awakening your consciences, it should produce some political effect.

It is practicable then, and it is the duty of ministers to direct the attention of their people, and arouse their just indignation towards criminals of this description. Nor will it be difficult for the people, once awake and engaged, to effect their purpose.

THE CHURCHES MUST HELP!

If only the members of christian churches become decided in their opposition to [slaveholding,] it will produce a sensation through the land. The votes of professing christians of different denominations are too numerous and important to be thrown away. And will not the churches awake? Will professors of religion, a religion commanding 'love to enemies,' and breathing 'peace on earth and good will to men,' uphold deliberately, and encourage by their suffrage the practice of [slaveholding?] On this ground only, a formidable stand may be made.

THE CONSCIENTIOUS AND THE PATRIOTIC MUST
UNITE.

But the churches will not be left to stand alone. In every part of the nation there are multitudes, conscientious and patriotic, whose zealous co-operation may be expected. *Voluntary associations may be formed; correspondences may be established; and a concert of action secured.* And even should the contest be more arduous; if, in the tempest of an election all these exertions should seem to be swept away, and religion, and conscience, and patriotism, to be lost in the delirium of passion; are there not in every church, and in every congregation, a chosen few who would brave the storm; whom no sophistry could deceive, no influence bend, and no passion move from their purpose? Are there not in every parish, at least ten righteous persons, to avert the curse of heaven and commence a reformation? But ten persons in every congregation in the land, would constitute a weight of influence ultimately decisive. In a government like ours, where a State is often almost equally divided, a few thousand votes are too precious to be lost. When, therefore, it comes once to be known that [slaveholding] is a serious blot upon the character of a candidate, and that in every district and in every town, there are considerate and conscientious people who will not vote for him, parties will not risk their cause upon the shoulders of such men; [slaveholders] will become unpopular candidates; and those will be selected, who shall merit, and insure your suffrage. . . . Let it be known that even one county will not uphold despotism and murder, and the names of despots and [men-stealers] will no longer disgrace your tickets of suffrage. The [holding of slaves, or apologizing for the crime,] will be-

come a disgrace—a millstone about the neck of aspiring ambition.

TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITY.

You have often lamented the prevalence of [slaveholding,] but have not known how, as individuals, to do any thing to arrest the evil. Now, you perceive what you can do. The remedy is before you, it is simple, and easy, and certain; and if you do not apply it, if you continue to vote for [slaveholders] and thus to uphold the crime, you are partakers in the sin, and accountable for all the evils which will ensue, and which you may now so easily prevent.

OUR GUILT EXPOSES US TO THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

Finally, the appointment of [slaveholders] to office will justly offend the Most High, and assuredly call down upon us the judgments of heaven.

[Slaveholding] is a great national sin; . . . the whole land is defiled with blood. . . . This work of desolation is performed often by men in office—by the appointed guardians of life and liberty. . . . Oh, tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon! Alas! it is too late to conceal our infamy; the sun hath shined on our guilt, and the eye of God with brighter beams surveys the whole. He beholds and he will punish. His quiver is full of arrows, his sword is impatient of confinement; ten thousand plagues stand ready to execute his wrath; conflagration, tempest, earthquake, war, famine and pestilence wait his command only to cleanse the land from blood; to involve in one common ruin, both the murderer and those who tolerate his crimes. Atheists may scoff, but there is a God—a God who governs the earth in righteousness—an avenger of crimes—the supporter and destroyer of nations. And

as clay is in the hand of the potter, so are the nations of the earth in the hand of God. At what instant he speaks concerning a nation, to pluck up, to pull down, and destroy it; if that nation repent, God will avert the impending judgment. And at what instant he shall speak concerning a nation, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in his sight, he will arrest the intended blessing and send forth judgments in its stead. Be not deceived—the greater our present mercies and seeming security, the greater is the guilt of our rebellion, and the more certain, swift, and awful, will be our calamity. We are [slaveholders,] a nation of [slaveholders,] while we tolerate and reward the perpetrators of the crime. And shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

But, it will be said, especially in cases of contested elections, if you refuse to vote for this man because he is a [slaveholder,] his opponent, a worse man will come in.

A worse man cannot come in. The [slaveholder] is a [man-stealer;] and is a man's difference from you in political opinion more criminal than [man-stealing?] And will you vote for a [slaveholder,] a despot, proud, haughty and revengeful, to keep out another man, perhaps equally qualified and of a fair fame, merely because he thinks not in politics exactly as you do? To what will such bigotry lead? There will soon be no crime too gross to be overlooked by party men; and no criminal too loathsome and desperate to float into office on the tide of party. When the violence of competition rises so high in our country, as to lead parties in their struggles for victory to tread

down the laws of God, disregarding entirely the moral characters of candidates for office; if their being on our side will sanctify their crimes, and push them reeking with blood into office; the time is not distant when we shall have no liberties to protect. Such a people are too wicked to be free, and God will curse them, by leaving them to eat of the fruit of their way.

But suppose the opponent of the [slaveholder,] beside his political heresy, to be a bad man also, and guilty of the same crime? If I do not vote for the man on my side in politics, will not this be helping his antagonist, and will not this be as bad as if I voted directly? No. You are accountable for your own conduct only. If other people put into office a bad man, whom you could not keep out but by voting for one equally bad, for their conduct you are not accountable. It is certainly a different thing whether a vile man comes into power *by* your agency directly, or in *spite* of it. But suppose the [slaveholder] in all respects excepting this crime, is a better man than his opponent, of two evils may we not choose the least? Yes, of two natural evils you may; if you must lose a finger or an arm, cut off the finger; but of two sinful things you may choose neither; and therefore, you may not vote for one bad man, a [man-stealer,] to keep out another bad man, though even a worse one. It is to do evil, that good may come; and of all who do this the apostle declares, 'their damnation is just.'—What must we do then in those cases where the character of the candidates are such, as that it would be sinful to vote for either of them? Vote for neither, and in future you will not be insulted by such candidates for suffrage. Let those who stand behind the curtain and move the springs, know that you have consciences,

and that you will be guided by them ; and they will take care that you shall not be compelled to throw away your votes.

But perhaps the liberties of our country are at stake—might we not *for once*, and on such an *emergency*, vote for a [slaveholder?] The same song has been sung at every election these twenty years, and by each party. It is an electioneering trick to excite your fears, to awaken your prejudices, to inflame your passions, to overpower your consciences, and to get your vote whether right or wrong.

But suppose your liberties are in danger ; if they are so far gone, as to depend on the election of one man, and that man a tyrant—a [man-stealer]—they are gone irretrievably. Beside the absurdity of appointing a *despot* to protect liberty, it is to be remembered that God is our only efficient protector. Men are merely instruments ; but will God bless such instruments, selected in contempt of his authority, and rescued from the sword of his justice ? All attempts to avert perdition by means at war with the precepts of heaven, will prove abortive ; you hatch the cockatrice egg, and weave the web of spider. If your liberties are in danger, reform—pray—and call to your aid men of rectitude, men of clean hands, whose counsels God may be expected to bless.

‘ But it is difficult to know in all cases who are good men.’ True ; and will you therefore vote for those whom you know to be bad men ? Rather discard those whom you know to be bad men, and scrutinize critically the characters of those who profess to be good, and after your utmost care, you will be sufficiently exposed to deception.

NO OTHER CRIME SO ALARMING.

‘ But why so inveterate against [slaveholding]

in particular?' Because, at present, it is a great and alarming national sin; because no other crime with such shameless effrontery, bids defiance to the laws of God and man; because no other crime is so palliated, justified, and with such impunity sanctioned by the example of the great; and, of course, no other crime has so alarming an aspect upon the principles of our young men, and the moral sensibilities of our country. I may add, that no other description of criminals, if they escape with impunity, may publish their crimes, glory in their shame, and still be rewarded with the confidence and honors of their country. The crisis is an awful one; and this apathy to a crime of the deepest dye, is a prelude of approaching death. But, though there is a peculiar reason for attempting to arouse the listless attention of the public to this sin, there are *decisive objections* to the appointment to office of any immoral man. The prodigal, the drunkard, the profane, the Sabbath-breaker, the adulterer, the gambler, are all disqualified to act as legislators; and no man with an enlightened conscience, can vote for them.

THE WICKEDNESS OF MEN IN OFFICE—ITS CAUSE.

'But if we are so critical in our scrutiny of character, we shall never be able to find men duly qualified to manage our affairs.' Most humiliating confession! But how has it come to pass (if true) that so many public characters are immoral men? It is because we, the people, have not even requested them to behave better. We have never made it necessary for them to be moral. We have told them, and we have told our youth who are rising to active life, that private character is a useless thing, as it respects the attainment of our suffrage. We have told them, that, if they pleased, they

might associate for drunkenness and midnight revelry, pour contempt upon the institutions of religion, . . . and still be esteemed hallowed patriots. If it be true, that a strict scrutiny of character would exile from office many who now fill public stations, it is our *criminal negligence* that has brought this to pass. But the inference, that setting up moral character as a test would leave us destitute of proper candidates, is groundless—it is the very way to multiply them. Let it once be made known, that a fair private character is indispensable to the attainment of public suffrage, and reformatations will take place. And besides this, our young men will be growing up to habits of virtue under the guardian influence of this restraint. At first, you may encounter a little self-denial, by dismissing men of irregular lives in whom you have been accustomed to confide. But their places will soon be supplied by an host of men of fair fame, and better qualified to serve their country.

CLOSING APPEAL.

And now let me ask you solemnly; with these considerations in view, will you persist in your attachment to these guilty men? Will you any longer, either deliberately or thoughtlessly vote for them? Will you renounce allegiance to your Maker, and cast the Bible behind your back? Will you confide in men, void of the fear of God and destitute of moral principle? Will you intrust . . . *liberty* to DESPOTS? Are you patriots, and will you constitute those legislators, who despise you, and despise equal laws, and wage war with the eternal principles of justice? Are you christians, and, by upholding [men-stealers,] will you deluge the land with blood, and fill it with widows and with orphans? Will you aid in the prostration of jus-

tice—in the escape of criminals—in the extinction of liberty? Will you place in the chair of state—in the senate—or on the bench of justice, men who, if able, would murder you for speaking truth? . . . Will you destroy public morality by tolerating, yea, by rewarding the most infamous crimes? Will you teach your children that there is no guilt in [slaveholding?] Will you instruct them to think lightly of [man-stealing?] . . . Will you bestow your suffrage, when you know that by withholding it you may arrest this deadly evil—when this too is the only way in which it can be done, and when the present is perhaps the only period in which resistance can avail—when the remedy is so easy, so entirely in your power; and when God, if you do not punish these guilty men, will most inevitably punish you?

* * * * *

With such considerations before you, why do you wish to vote for such men? What have they done for you, what can they do, that better men cannot as happily accomplish? And will you incur all this guilt, and hazard all these consequences for nothing? Have you no religion, no conscience, no love to your country, no attachment to liberty, no humanity, no sympathy, no regard to your own welfare in this life, and no fear of consequences in the life to come? Oh, my countrymen, awake! Awake to crimes which are your disgrace—to miseries which know not a limit—to judgments which will make you desolate.